

IOWA BIRD LIFE

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE

IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

VOL. XIII

MARCH, 1943

NO. 1



OFFICERS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

President—Dr. Martin L. Grant, Cedar Falls, Iowa

Vice-President—Ethan A. Hemsley, Dubuque, Iowa

Sec'y-Treas.—Miss Lillian Serbousek, 1226 Second St. S.W.,
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Librarian—Dr. Warren N. Keck, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Editor—Fred J. Pierce, Winthrop, Iowa

Executive Council:

Mrs. Mary L. Bailey, Sioux City, Iowa

Miss R. Lucile Loban, Waterloo, Iowa

Mrs. Myrle L. Jones, Hamburg, Iowa

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

Publications of the Union: Mimeographed letters, 1923-1928; 'The Bulletin,' 1929-1930; 'Iowa Bird Life,' beginning 1931.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$1.00 a year (includes membership dues). Single copies 25c each. Claims for missing or defective copies of the magazine should be made within six months of date of issue. Keep the Editor informed of your correct address.

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION OFFICE
WINTHROP, IOWA

Entered as second-class matter February 9, 1932, at the post office at Winthrop, Iowa,
under the Act of March 3, 1879.

AN IOWA ORNITHOLOGIST: T. C. STEPHENS

By MRS. H. J. TAYLOR
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Ancestry gives, in a general way, the index to character and ability rather than to special attainment. The law of life is the same to everyone and only the years can reveal the strength and capacity of the individual. Everyone who attains in one field or in several fields is interesting and makes a contribution of value. To earn a good living, and nothing more, is not enough to develop the individual. Human interest must extend to various fields if life is to be rich and well-rounded. The subject of this sketch has attained in his main line and also in various side lines.

In Adrian, Michigan, a town of about 7,000 inhabitants at that time, Thomas Calderwood Stephens was born March 9, 1876. His father, David Stuber Stephens, held a professorship in Adrian College, a Methodist institution, and later became its president. The prevailing occupations of the Stephens ancestry were farming and preaching. The mother, Marietta Gibson Stephens, was of English descent. The family lived in Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania, where Mr. Gibson conducted a "general store" such as were common at that time in almost every town. The store carried everything that anybody needed or wanted in the line of groceries. It also carried a good line of hardware, crockery and glassware, and feed for cattle. In this store there was also a stock of patent medicines with medicine stamps indicating Civil War vintage. The store also had horehound candy in sticks and other hard candies in various colors. Here farmers traded their butter and eggs for whatever supplies were most needed.

Adrian was more than a town; it was a young city. It took particular pride in its school system. It was here that Tom Stephens began his formal education. At a very early age he became interested in birds. Collecting birds' eggs, to see who could get the largest number, was in vogue among early settlers of the Middle West. Here and there were boys who had a deeper interest than merely collecting eggs. Such interest was shown by Tom Stephens, then seven or eight years old, and his friend Frank Wilson. Tom would not take the eggs of birds nesting on the extensive home lot, which had a variety of beautiful ornamental trees as well as a large fruit orchard.

Tom and his friend collected butterflies, minerals, shells and coins as well as birds' eggs. On October 20, 1886, when Tom was ten years old, the two boys pooled their Natural History possessions. They put shelves on the walls of an abandoned chicken-house to hold their various curios. In time they added three boys to their organization, which they named "The Huxley, Kost and Darwin Museum." Dr. Kost, a local man, was a museum builder and he was interested in everything out of doors. These boys were young naturalists. Even today Dr. Stephens has specimens that in 1888 were among his prized possessions in the "H. K. and D. M." located in the old chicken-house.

In 1888 the Stephens family moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where the father had been called to the editorship of a weekly church paper. After eight years in Pittsburgh the family moved to Kansas City, Kansas, where David Stephens became the head of a newly established church college. For two years Tom Stephens attended the college of which his father was head. It was strong in the languages but not in its laboratory facilities. Tom's leaning was toward pure sciences and was making itself felt more and more.

In the fall of 1900 he entered the University of Chicago, specializing in zoology. For the summer of 1901 he had a scholarship at

Woods Hole, after which he returned to Kansas City. Financially, he was not able to return to the University of Chicago, and he was uncertain of his next step. Being "broke" is a ruthless "stop" sign but it must be reckoned with. If the goal is in sight there is always a way of reaching it. There was a medical school in Kansas City. The sciences taught there would be helpful for any scientific line, thought Tom Stephens, and he enrolled in the college. He expected to attend a year or possibly two years. His aim was not to be a physician but to get a wider knowledge of the sciences. He liked the work in the medical college and remained three years, taking the M.D. degree in 1904 from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the Kansas University. During his attendance at the medical school he earned money as best he could. He read gas meters three or four days each month. In addition to this he, with his brother, took the contract with the Gas Company for lighting and extinguishing the street lamps of Kansas City. Most of the city had electric lights; however, in some parts of the residential districts gas lamps were still used and had to be put on and off according to the moon. The city would not pay for lighting when the moon was shining. He and his brother had charge of about 100 lamps. It took two trips a night, and the hours for lighting and extinguishing depended wholly on the moon.

On receiving his medical degree in 1904, Dr. Stephens took over, for one month, the country practice in a small Nebraska town while the regular doctor was away for post graduate work. This was an opportunity to earn money to continue his education. To Dr. Stephens the month of practice must be memorable for the six confinement cases that came to him, two of which were instrument deliveries. In all his medical course he had not witnessed the birth of a baby. His knowledge of confinement cases was entirely derived from demonstrations with a dummy and a doll. The six cases he delivered were wholly successful. Yet this month was the beginning and the end of his practice in medicine. On the return of the regular physician he spent the rest of the summer in Wisconsin working for the H. J. Heinz Company. Heinz recognized his ability and would have made a business man of him, but from boyhood Tom Stephens was looking forward to higher education for which he must make his own financial provision.



DR. T. C. STEPHENS
(Reprinted from 'The Condor', May-June, 1939.)

From the age of 14 years he had worked summers. His first job, in the summer of 1890, was on a farm where he did everything from planting and transplanting garden truck to bunching the vegetables for the market. His hours were from six in the morning until six in the evening, for which he received 60c a day. Each day he walked one and one-half miles to and from work. The following five summers he spent in the printing office of his uncle in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at a salary of \$3.00 a week. Transportation from his home to the office and return cost about \$1.00 a week, which greatly reduced his earnings. In the summer of 1896 he had a job in the printing shop of the Heinz Company. Later in the summer the editor of the Methodist 'Recorder' offered him \$5.00 to stay in his office for one week during his absence. The money was acceptable but it meant less to Tom Stephens than the valuable experience he received during that week. The next three summers, '97, '98, '99, he was with the Heinz Company at \$10.00 and \$12.00 a week plus room, board, and traveling expenses. In these three summers he saved about \$100.00. In 1899, after finishing work with the Heinz Company, he went to Pittsburgh to look for steady work. He obtained a job as substitute reporter on the Pittsburgh 'Chronicle - Telegraph.' This job was greatly to his liking and he was loath to give it up for a steadier and better paying one with the Frank-Kneeland Machine Company which paid him \$10.00 a week. He was determined on more education and he must earn money to get it. The winter's work in the machine shops netted him about \$75.00.



DR. STEPHENS ON A BIRD TRIP IN JULY, 1938

graduate student on a Fellowship appointment. In 1906 he accepted a call to teach at Morningside College, a Methodist school at Sioux City, Iowa, where for many years he has been head of the Department of Biology. The medical profession may have lost a competent physician when Dr. Stephens decided to follow another line of work, but the teaching profession in Morningside College gained what it could not well afford to lose. His students testify to the lasting value of his work. Without any Sabbatical leave he has been teaching at Morningside College 37 years. He has been refreshed and enlarged by his varied summer activities. One summer was spent at the University of Chicago as assistant in Zoology. For eight summers he was on the teaching staff of Iowa's Lakeside Laboratory, and four summers he was on the Research Staff. Two summers he was with the Wild Life School at McGregor, Iowa. Wherever he went, study of bird life was always carried on.

In the autumn of 1904 Dr. Stephens entered the University of Chicago as a grad-

Dr. Stephens has been a valued citizen of the community in Sioux City, Iowa. He was secretary and later president of the Sioux City Academy of Science. He was also president of the Iowa Conference of the American Association of University Professors. In 1911 he took membership in the Wilson Ornithological Club. He became deeply interested in it. He saw the need and the possibility of increasing its membership and of extending its usefulness through enlarging its publication—the 'Wilson Bulletin.' In 1914 he became president of the Wilson Ornithological Club, which office he held three years. Without stint he gave of his time and ability to make the club a going and growing concern. Its membership increased rapidly. In 1925 Dr. Stephens became editor of the 'Wilson Bulletin.' This office he held 14 years. He was untiring in his efforts to build it up. In a few years it was considered the Bird Magazine of the Mississippi Valley and was ranked with the leading ornithological publications. The ability of the editor was widely recognized. To no one individual is more credit due for the place the Wilson Ornithological Club holds than to Dr. Stephens. Referring to him in a letter to the author, Dr. Joseph Grinnell said: "What a splendid time I had with the Stephensens in Sioux City. . . . I like Professor Stephens immensely. He is a sincere worker." Dr. Grinnell on several occasions called my attention to the editorship and the clear, unbiased book reviews by Dr. Stephens.

His interest in birds, which began in early childhood, has grown with the years to include all wildlife and also all outstanding and unusual features produced through nature. In 1915 he became president of the Iowa Conservation Association. To him interest in conservation is an alert responsibility to be ever ready for action. He is known for his successful efforts to protect wildlife. In 1917 he led the fight for the Quail threatened with extinction in the State of Iowa. He was assisted in this struggle by several outstanding conservationists, among them Dr. W. T. Hornaday, director of the New York Zoological Park. Dr. Stephens plead for the Quail that had been so abundant in pioneer days. To those who insisted that the Quail was sure to become extinct on account of Iowa's severe winters, he replied that "The bird could maintain itself against the vicissitudes of nature, but not against nature and man combined." (Iowa Forestry and Conservation Association, 1916, pp. 61-69.)

He is alert to perverse interests that may creep into legislative measures as well as to the sincere efforts that would protect the birds. He recognized the fact that a reduced bag limit was a step in the right direction and added: "I do not believe, however, that these bag limits will save the birds from extinction. Nothing but an absolute closed season for a term of years is likely to avail." The several trips that he made to Des Moines during the General Assembly were effective. A bill for a five-year closed season for both Quail and Prairie Chicken was passed in 1917. Twice after that bills were passed that closed the season for another five years, making 15 years in all. His untiring efforts secured a success that has saved the Quail from extinction in Iowa. Dr. Hornaday was greatly pleased with the success of the effort and presented to Dr. Stephens the Gold Medal of the Permanent Wild Life Protection Fund.

Dr. Stephens has hobbies—lots of them! Anyone who is acquainted with him is familiar with some of his hobbies. One of these sidelines is photography. He is a stamp collector. This interest serves as a relaxation and is carried on without competition. He confesses that for summer reading he likes a good detective story or two. If there is an old book store anywhere within a mile he is sure to find it. Time means nothing to him when he can browse over dusty, well-worn volumes and he is sure to find something that delights him. He will not miss you if you go to a movie or two. When you return he will still be looking over the old books. Bird life and the collecting of

shells have both been hobbies from childhood, and in these lines Dr. Stephens has made distinct contributions. He worked alone in the field of bird life until he met Dr. Guy C. Rich in Sioux City. His companionship and mutual interest resulted in many delightful and profitable field trips and discussions on bird values. A. J. Anderson, a Sioux City taxidermist, was also a helpful and interesting acquaintance. He gave authentic data, through his mounted specimens, on rare birds of the vicinity.

The bird study field trips which were in vogue in the early years of 1900 in many cases were little more than pleasant social, healthful outings. In 1919 'Iowa Conservation', a quarterly magazine, published four articles on bird study by Dr. Stephens. These were timely. They revealed the meaning and value of field trips and how to get the most out of them.

The inspiration for shell collecting came in 1898 when Herbert E. Sargent, museum curator in Grand Rapids, Michigan, visited in Kansas City and took Tom Stephens, a young man of 22 years, on several collecting trips. Such contact does more than school can do. From that time on shell collecting became a hobby with ever increasing interest. In 1911 Dr. Stephens met Professor B. Shimek at the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory. Their mutual interest led them far into the field of the great family of mollusks.

Dr. Stephens is a thorough student in all he undertakes, be it a hobby or the main line of activity. He has given definite values in conservation, mollusks, and ornithology, as well as in his main line.

OBSERVATIONS ON A RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

By MARTIN L. GRANT

Iowa State Teachers College
CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

On May 27, 1942, Stanley Petersen called me to say that he had shot a hawk and located its nest. On examination the bird proved to be a female Red-shouldered Hawk, 21 inches long, with an expanse of 42 inches. The nest was 35 feet up in a large bur oak tree which was part of a lowland forest, about 150 yards from the margin of the Cedar River, two miles northwest of Cedar Falls, Black Hawk County. It filled a crotch formed by two branches and the main trunk, and consisted largely of sticks, the center being filled with a mass of dried vegetation covered with a layer of green leaves, forming a flat top surface measuring 25 by 14 inches.

Three downy young occupied the nest. The largest of the three was just barely able to stand erect, while the other two could not raise themselves off their tarsi (Fig. 1). The juvenal plumage was obvious on the back, wings, and tail, the longest primary protruding two inches from its sheath. The head, underparts and legs were covered with dingy-white down. The biggest individual was 12½ inches long, with an expanse of 24 inches. The bill was dark bluish-black, cere pale greenish-white, lores gray and almost bare, iris dark gray, and the tarsus (one-third feathered) and toes greenish-white. I judged it to be about 18 days old.

The only food remains present in the nest were one juvenal Bluebird about 10 days old, and two June beetles. One of the young later regurgitated a frog. The stomach of the adult contained the remains of two crayfish, a mole, a ground beetle, and several large dead leaves. Another youngster coughed up the fur of a mole and the wing-covers of several ground and click beetles.

Petersen had shot the adult while it was inside a duck pen on his property, in which he was attempting to raise some Mallards. He had

not seen the hawk take any of the ducks, but a setting of Mallard eggs was expected to hatch within the week, the nest being less than 100 feet from the tree containing the hawk's nest. Since he was determined to get rid of the hawks completely, two of the young were eventually disposed of, and the largest retained as a pet.

The young hawks sat back on their tarsi and opened their mouths in an attitude of defense, but they would not bite, even when a finger was introduced into the mouth. One of them gave the jay-like call of the Red-shoulder, in quality and volume just like that of the adult. They would not pick up meat (hamburger) which was offered them, but would swallow it if it was placed far enough back in the throat. The young hawk that was kept soon learned to feed himself, and lived on liver, hamburger, dead rats, and miscellaneous animal matter. For a while it was confined with an adult Screech Owl, but the combination didn't work, as the owl was too much frightened by the hawk, even allowing the latter to steal food from its beak.



FIG. 1 (UPPER), JUVENAL RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS
FIG. 2, RED-SHOULDERED HAWK, AGE 14 WEEKS

The hawk was raised to maturity, but never became really tame. It always was much disturbed by the presence of people. When hungry, it screamed almost constantly, and it didn't need much of an excuse to make a racket, jarring the nerves of everyone in the vicinity. Largely for this reason, as well as for the sharpness of the talons, I can not recommend the species as a pet.

When the bird was judged old enough, I gave it practice flying lessons by throwing it up into the air 30 feet or so, upon which it would glide down to the ground and crash ungracefully. Frankly, I would say it didn't learn very rapidly. After several weeks of such treatment it was banded and released in the woods, August 17, at the age of about 14 weeks (Fig. 2). I do not know how it fared thereafter. Search a week later failed to locate it, but a suspicious-looking Great Horned Owl was found.

THE 1942 CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS IN IOWA

The unfavorable weather conditions during Christmas week and general war conditions are reflected in the small number of Christmas bird censuses taken by Iowa observers in 1942. The month of December, 1942, was the coldest December in the last 15 years, according to weather records. During the month the state was subjected to several below-zero waves and heavy snow storms. There were also

rain and sleet storms and very few clear days during the entire month. The inclement weather sent south many species of birds which are ordinarily found in Iowa in early winter, as evidenced by numerous omissions in the tabulated list.

We are grateful to those who contributed their census reports. Those who were able to get out for the census found much of interest in the snow-covered woods and fields. This year, more than ever before, the bird trips furnished a welcome relaxation from the serious side of life. The combined lists are worthy of careful study. Taken in connection with lists published in other years, when December presented milder weather conditions, the comparisons will be found interesting. We are indebted to the Iowa Conservation Commission for the use of the accompanying illustrations.

Data on place, time, weather and the observers who reported are given below. (Hours are given in Central War Time.)



A NORTHEAST IOWA STREAM

ATLANTIC (fields, woods and River, as far as 4 miles southwest of city, and evergreen wooded cemetery, 2 miles east of city): Dec. 27; 9-11 a.m., 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. Cloudy; ground covered with 1 in. snow, drifting with strong northwest wind; temp. 18° at start, 20° at return; 9 miles on foot, 4 by car. Observers together. Mr. and Mrs. Manney Mallette, Chas. Mallette, Glenn O. Jones, Don Bice, Eugene Ruhr (members of Atlantic Bird Club).

hemp patches along Nishnabotna

hemp patches along Nishnabotna



IOWA'S WINTER WOODLANDS ARE ALWAYS AN INVITATION TO THE BIRD STUDENT

CEDAR RAPIDS (Ellis Park and Manhattan): Dec. 30; 9 a.m. to 12. Cloudy except for 1 hr.; ground snow-covered; brisk north wind; temp. 22° at start, 26° at return; 2 miles on foot. Mrs. E. J. Petranek, Misses Myra Willis, Virginia Slauson, Lillian Serbousek.

DES MOINES (Charles Sing Denman Wood, Dove Woods along Beaver Creek, Brenton Slough, Morning Star; afoot and by auto): Dec. 26; 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Heavy fog, making visibility very poor; icy under foot; no wind; light drizzle turning to rain at noon; temp. 34° at start and return; total party miles, 27½ on foot, 81 by auto. Observers worked in 3 parties. Mrs. Toni R. Wendelburg, Irene M. Smith, Olivia McCabe, Dwight Smith, Frieda Troeger, Bruce F. Stiles, Mrs. Harold R. Peasley.

ELKHART (territory along Skunk River east of city): Jan. 1, 1943; 1 hr. in a.m., 2 in p.m. Cloudy, visibility poor; sharp east wind; temp. 30°, 10 miles by car, 2 miles on foot. Observers together. Grace Mathis, Mrs. Archie Herman.

KEOSAUQUA (immediate vicinity, mostly along Des Moines River, covered on foot): Dec. 22; 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Clear most of time; snow and ice melting; open places in river; temp. 40°. Warren N. Keck.



WINTER REFLECTIONS:
AN IOWA LANDSCAPE

| | Atlantic | Cedar Rapids | Des Moines | Elkhart | Keosauqua | Sigourney | Sioux City | Tama | Waubonsie State Park | Wintrop |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|---------|-----------|-----------|------------|------|-------------------------|---------|
| Mallard | | | 124 | | | | 12 | | | |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Red-tailed Hawk | 2 | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Rough-legged Hawk | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| Pigeon Hawk | | | | | 3 | | | | | |
| Bob-white | | | 5 | | 16 | 12 | | | | |
| Ring-necked Pheasant | 1 | | | | | | 5 | 4 | | 13 |
| Mourning Dove | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Great Horned Owl | | | 3 | | | | | | 2 | |
| Barred Owl | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Saw-whet Owl | | | 2 | | | | | | | |
| Flicker | 3 | | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 15 | |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker | 4 | | 5 | | | | 1 | 3 | 8 | 1 |
| Red-headed Woodpecker | 2 | 2 | 3 | | | 4 | | 2 | | |
| Hairy Woodpecker | 9 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Downy Woodpecker | 17 | 1 | 25 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 3 |
| Horned Lark (Prairie) | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| Blue Jay | 7 | 9 | 33 | 2 | 8 | 5 | | 9 | 20 | |
| American Magpie | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Crow | 25 | 2 | 3552 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 112 | 8 | 35 | 13 |
| Chickadee | 75 | 9 | 93 | 19 | 20 | 10 | 37 | 13 | 20 | 12 |
| Tufted Titmouse | 3 | | | 20 | 8 | | | | 16 | 1 |
| White-breasted Nuthatch | 21 | 9 | 24 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| Red-breasted Nuthatch | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| Brown Creeper | 4 | | 4 | 1 | | 3 | 2 | | 1 | |
| Robin | | | | | | | | | 33 | |
| Bluebird | 2 | | | | | | | | 9 | |
| Golden-crowned Kinglet | 5 | | | | 6 | 1 | 1 | | 4 | |
| Starling | 2 | | 15 | 18 | 10 | 11 | | 75 | 3 | 1 |
| English Sparrow | 80 | 50 | 740 | 50 | 50 | | 288 | 145 | 52 | 30 |
| Meadowlark | | | | | | | | 9 | | |
| Cardinal | 9 | 17 | 75 | 8 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 22 | |
| Purple Finch | 15 | 6 | | 2 | | | | | | |
| Pine Siskin | | | | | | | 18 | | | |
| Goldfinch | 50 | | 49 | | | | 10 | | 38 | |
| Slate-colored Junco | 150 | 3 | 106 | 4 | 56 | 13 | 12 | 16 | 105 | |
| Tree Sparrow | 130 | | 97 | 6 | 23 | 10 | 7 | 27 | 118 | 20 |
| Harris's Sparrow | | | | | | | | | 4 | |
| Song Sparrow | | | 3 | | | | | | 2 | |
| Number of Species | 22 | 12 | 24 | 13 | 19 | 16 | 21 | 20 | 25 | 12 |
| Number of Observers | 6 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total Iowa List | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

SIGOURNEY (ravines around Legion Park and down West Creek $\frac{1}{2}$ mile): Dec. 24; 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Ground snow-covered; temp. 22° at start and return. Observers together. Mrs. W. C. DeLong and Boy Scout Richard DeLong.

SIOUX CITY (Big Sioux River from Riverside Park to Stone Park, "Plum Creek Territory", Logan Park Cemetery, Grandview Park, Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Country Club district, Sergeant Bluff territory east of Missouri River): Dec. 27; 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Lightly overcast until 2 p.m., remainder of day clear; ground covered with ice and light snow; wind velocity, 20 m. p. h.; temp. 16° at start, 22° at return; total party miles, 11 on foot, 30 by car. R. D. Hissong, Doris Anfinson Cory, Jean L. Laffoon, Joyce Laffoon, Dale Laffoon, Zell C. Lee, Dr. J. L. Schott (Sioux City Bird Club).

TAMA (and within an 8-mile radius of the city): Dec. 26. Unfavorable weather and roads in poor condition. Mr. and Mrs. W. G. MacMartin.

WAUBONSIE STATE PARK (chiefly within the park's 630 acres of Missouri loess bluffs; east and south 4 miles and return by auto): Dec. 22; 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., 2 to 6 p.m. Clear; ground and trees covered with ice under $\frac{1}{2}$ in. of fresh snow; light north wind; temp. 27° at start, 34° at return; 8 miles on foot, 8 by auto. Observers together. Mr. and Mrs. Myrtle L. Jones.

WINTHROP (Pierce farm and adjacent farms): Dec. 29; 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Cloudy; 5 in. ice-encrusted snow on ground; open places in Buffalo Creek; light north wind; temp. 34° at start, 30° at return; 3 miles afoot. Fred J. Pierce.

THE SPRING CONVENTION AND A BIRD CENSUS ANNOUNCEMENT

By MARTIN L. GRANT
Iowa State Teachers College
CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

The annual convention of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union will be a one-day meeting held at Cedar Rapids on Sunday, May 16, without a formal program of papers. Note that the date is one week later than the usual time for the convention. This is to allow anyone who can, to take part in both the convention and the census (see below). Also, there has been each year some slight objection to holding the meeting on Mother's Day, which is May 9.

It is with personal regret that the officers have made this decision to cut down on this activity of the Union, but it seems expedient in view of the current economic situation. Tire conservation, gas rationing, ODT recommendations concerning pleasure driving, and increased war-effort activity of the Union members are among the factors which have made this move necessary. A poll by the president of all the officers, Executive Council members, and Past Presidents of the Union revealed that no one of these 12 people was in favor of holding a regular two-day meeting. Two of those polled were against holding any convention at all, seven favored a one-day meeting, and three did not express themselves on this point.

Tentative plans involve holding a field trip in the morning, a noon luncheon, a short business meeting in the afternoon, and an informal social get-together. Reading of papers, addresses, and the banquet will be eliminated. We frankly do not expect as large an attendance as usual, but it is hoped that as many members as possible will come to enjoy these activities.

In order to arrange for field-trip transportation, a noon luncheon, and a meeting place, will each member who expects to attend please notify the Secretary, Miss Serbousek, by post-card by May 1, telling how many people you will be bringing, and whether or not you will take your car. You will be answered with a statement as to time and place of meeting and other details which will have been arranged.

Realizing that many members will be unable to attend the convention, largely for reasons of transportation, a substitute has been devised, which will, it is hoped, help maintain the interest of the membership. This will be the taking of a bird census on May 9, a week before the convention, of a type similar to the Christmas census, and subject to the same rules. The results will be published in summary form in the June number of 'Iowa Bird Life'. This suggestion was first made by Mr. and Mrs. Myrle Jones and was presented to the 12 members referred to above, of which 10 were favorably inclined, and two made no comment.

Rules for the census, similar to those of the Audubon Society, are:

1. DATE. May 9. The census must be taken on this date. It is hoped that the uniformity in time, and thus of weather conditions, will produce results from different parts of the state that will be more evenl comparable.
2. TIME. 4 hours minimum. A smaller period would not be as likely to furnish a typical cross-section of the bird life of a region. The whole day may be employed.
3. AREA. Any place in Iowa. No restrictions as to size, but it is

suggested that the area covered be kept within one county where possible. For each group reporting, only one locality will be recorded, so pick out a centrally located town or area as a group locality for your census. Only one report will be printed from each area. It is suggested that the local bird club sponsor the trips, and while any number of people may take part, and they may divide up into as many groups as they wish, all the records should be combined and sent in as one list.

4. ACCURACY. If the identification is uncertain do not include it. For any rare or unusual records, record the conditions under which observed, the distance of the bird, and the name of the observer. Make no attempt to record subspecies distinctions unless these are recognizable in the field.

5. ARRANGEMENT. Arrange the names of the species systematically according to the latest edition (1931) of the A.O.U. 'Check-list', which is followed by all recent bird books, such as DuMont's 'Revised List of the Birds of Iowa', Peterson's 'Field Guide to the Birds', etc. The Iowa Ornithologists' Union Daily Field Checking List has the birds arranged in this order, and a copy may be secured from the Secretary.

6. DATA. The report should include, in the following order:

- a. Name of locality and county. Type of country visited.
- b. Date (May 9), and time of day.
- c. Weather: temperature, precipitation, illumination, wind.
- d. Number of parties and number of observers in each, mileage covered by car and mileage on foot. Estimate the total number of observer-hours involved, e.g., 3 people on a 6-hour trip makes 18 individual-hours.
- e. Names and addresses of all participants. Indicate the leader of each group, i.e., the person responsible for the identifications.
- f. List of species observed, arranged in systematic order, with an estimate of the number of individuals of each.
- g. Total number of species and individuals seen.
- h. Comments on unusual records, with conditions and distance of the observations, and the name of the observer.
- i. Signature of the compiler.

7. Send all reports, typewritten, using one side of the paper, to the President, who will cooperate with the Editor in compiling the summary. No reports received after May 15 will be included.

The officers very cordially invite you to attend the convention, and all members should be glad to renew acquaintance there. As to gasoline, let your conscience be your guide. At any rate, everyone can participate in the census. We would like any comments as to the advisability of continuing this feature (tell us what you think of it at the end of your report), and we would be interested in suggestions for 1944.

GENERAL NOTES

A Mockingbird at Cedar Rapids.—I saw a Mockingbird within the city of Cedar Rapids on November 5, 1942. It was rather a cold day with the ground covered with ice and snow. I saw the bird near the men's gymnasium on the campus of Coe College. A later inquiry about a bird of this description indicated that the Mockingbird was staying about the city.

On my Christmas vacation to southeastern Iowa the lack of Starlings was rather interesting. We have usually noted large flocks of them about farms in former years; but this year they seemed to be scarce.
—WARREN N. KECK, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Yellow-headed Blackbird at Ames, Iowa.—On September 24, 1942, we noted four Yellow-headed Blackbirds with a flock of about 100 Bronzed Grackles on our back lawn at the north side of the Iowa State College Arboretum. This is our first record for the species at Ames in 17 years of residence.

The Arboretum, with an area of about 150 acres, contains several hundred labelled small groups of tree species and shrubs and many labelled individual species. The Herbaceous Garden adjacent to the Arboretum at its northwest corner (at the junction of Arbor, formerly Leek, Street and State Avenue) has several thousand labelled native grasses and other flowering herbs in beds. Professors Ralph R. Rothacker and John N. Martin have charge of the Arboretum and Herbaceous Gardens, respectively. Visitors are very welcome to these plantings. Convenient paths lead through the areas.

The Arboretum is traversed by a narrow creek, in which have been installed four small settling ponds that are attractive to birds. The College Orchard, about 160 acres, adjoins the Arboretum at the south. Two coveys of Bob-whites reside on the tract and as many as 30 Ring-necked Pheasants have been noted in a day.

The Orchard-Arboretum-Herbaceous Garden unit is a part of the some 2000-acre Iowa State College posted preserve on which shooting is not permitted.—GEORGE O. and THOMAS ROBT. HENDRICKSON, 2850 Arbor St., Ames, Iowa.

Bald Eagles Along the Mississippi in Winter.—Reports from conservation officers along the Mississippi River indicate more Bald Eagles than usual fishing in the open water during December, 1942. The Bald Eagle is principally a fish-eater, showing little preference between fresh fish and dead fish that have drifted to shore. In the open water below the various river dams where eagles concentrated, some flocks of as many as 15 of the birds were reported. At Bellevue a flock of some 100 American Mergansers collected in the open water below the dam. The mergansers would dive and bring up a fish, then the eagles would swoop down and take the fish away from them. Several reports of the eagles having picked up and carried off one of the ducks instead of a fish were called to the attention of the Conservation Commission.—JAMES R. HARLAN, State Conservation Commission, Des Moines, Iowa.

A January Bird Census at Dubuque.—Due to unavoidable circumstances, the Dubuque Bird Club did not participate in the Christmas bird census. On January 1, 1943, four members went to Linwood and Mt. Calvary Cemeteries and crossed the bridge into Wisconsin on foot. They saw 18 species including Herring Gull, Long-eared Owl, Screech Owl and Pileated Woodpecker.

On January 10, 1943, a club trip was taken as a substitute for the missing Christmas count. These 15 members took part in the census: Mrs. Ivan Boyd, Ival Schuster, David Reed, Paul Kort, Henry Herrmann, Mary Young, Pearl Schmidt, Eileen Elliott, C. O. Johnson, John Dykes, Donald Smith, Clifford Blades, Mrs. Robt. Ruegnitz, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Johnson. Our list follows.

DUBUQUE (Linwood and Mt. Calvary Cemeteries, and region about the dam): Jan. 10, 1943; 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sky overcast entire day; 7 in. of snow; temp. about 30°. Observers together. American Merganser, 10; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Bald Eagle, 1; Great Horned Owl, 1; Barred Owl, 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 3; Hairy Woodpecker, 4; Downy Woodpecker, 8; Blue Jay, 18; Crow, 25; Chickadee, 27; Tufted Titmouse, 7; White-breasted Nuthatch, 16; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 4; Starling, 8; English Sparrow, 50; Bronzed Grackle, 1; Cardinal, 5; Slate-colored Junco, 20. Total, 21 species.

Beginning December 16, a Red-breasted Nuthatch was a daily visitor at the window feeding-station of Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Johnson. On January 3, 1943, Lyle Bradley heard a strange though beautiful song coming from a garden. Upon investigation, he found a Northern Shrike; he secured two other members of the club to verify the identification.—MRS. R. W. JOHNSON, Dubuque, Iowa.

Evening Grosbeaks at Sioux City.—On the evening of September 17, 1942, I saw seven Evening Grosbeaks in the woodbine on my porch. They were eating the berries and later settled down for the night, but English Sparrows drove them out with a great noise and clatter. They then flew up on the roof of a nearby house, where the setting gave me a fine view of their coloring. They came back several times at the same time of evening, in fewer numbers each time, but were driven away by the sparrows. I saw two males distinctly, but I am not sure of the sex of the others.—MRS. MARY L. BAILEY, Sioux City, Iowa.

Great Blue Heron a Winter Victim.—On the morning of December 4, 1942, along Indian Creek in Humboldt County, I found a young Great Blue Heron hanging on a sharp limb that had pierced its throat. There were tracks and a few small branches lying on top of a recent snow, indicating that the bird had not been dead over 12 hours. There was a ball of ice the size of one's fist on one of the heron's feet. Evidently the heron had attempted to sit on a willow limb but could not keep his balance due to the size and weight of the ball of ice. As he slipped off he must have struggled to regain his balance and fell against the sharp stub which pierced his throat and held him fast. It was unusual to have the Great Blue Heron in this locality so late in the season.—PAUL LEAVERTON, State Conservation Officer, Humboldt, Iowa.

Avocet Killed in Union County.—On October 18, 1942, State Conservation Officer John Cameron of Creston, Iowa, found a freshly killed Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) floating on Summit Lake near Creston in Union County, Iowa. The bird had died from gunshot wounds. Jack Musgrove kindly prepared the skin and it is now a part of the collection of the State Historical Society. DuMont lists the bird as a rare migrant in Iowa. Berry reports a nesting record for Sioux County on June 2, 1900; DuMont reports one as having been collected in Johnson County, near Coralville, about 1930.—BRUCE F. STILES, Chief, Division of Fish and Game, Iowa State Conservation Commission, Des Moines, Iowa.

Winter Records in the Waubonsie State Park Area.—The following birds, while not seen on our census hike, were observed in this region during December and early January: Saw-whet Owl, Dec. 4; Purple Finch, Dec. 6; Meadowlark, Dec. 9; Shufeldt's Junco (30), Dec. 12; Winter Wren, Dec. 25; Red-winged Blackbird, Dec. 27; American Magpie, Dec. 27; Arctic Towhee, Dec. 28 and Jan. 7; Cedar Waxwing, Jan. 5; Mallard, Jan. 5.

On December 31, 1942, I saw 81 Robins and 14 Bluebirds. A flock of 69 of them were feeding in a little cemetery. In this cemetery there are several quite large cedars, and the birds were eating the little blue cedar berries. The Robins may also have used the cedars for roosting at night. Dogwood berries are used for food by the Robins, and they also work on the sumac, where they are often joined by Bluebirds and Flickers. This winter feeding continues until deep snow and colder weather drive them south. The Magpie was seen in Waubonsie Park on December 27. It is reported that three or four years ago quite a number of Magpies took up their abode in a large grove near the river and visited various bluff farms for feeding. Two Arctic Towhees, evidently a pair, were seen in the park on January 7, 1943.—MYRLE L. JONES, Hamburg, Iowa.

As we go to press we learn that another of our members is in the armed forces. Malcolm McDonald, of the faculty of Parsons College, Fairfield, is with a Medical detachment of the U. S. Army at Tampa, Florida.

Records for Eastern Iowa.—On August 11, 1942, we made our first record of Hungarian Partridge in the southwest corner of Clinton County. The chestnut-colored markings on some of the birds were conspicuous as they faced us in the road. We flushed nine and could hear more among the weeds.

During the evening of September 17, 1942, two large flocks of Caspian Terns circled above Cedar Rapids as though lost in migration. A few of the birds spent several weeks on Cedar Lake.

My sister Dolly and I spent two hours on each of two successive afternoons, December 29 and 30, 1942, on bird census trips in the woods near Wheatland. We did not record the number of individual birds seen, but our list may be of interest: 2 Red-shouldered Hawks, Flicker, Red-bellied, Red-headed, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Starling, English Sparrow, Cardinal, Goldfinch, Slate-colored Junco, Tree Sparrow. Wapsie bottoms that had been flooded were coated with a quarter-inch of ice. Bushes were ringed with ice umbrellas as high as two feet from the ground. We watched Titmice and Chickadees feeding on sheer ice where we could see no food.—C. ESTHER COPP, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The 'Quarterly Report' of the Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit (mimeographed) is always interesting reading. It is issued by Iowa State College at Ames, and the latest one covers the months of July, August and September, 1942. A number of wildlife study projects are outlined in considerable detail, including 'Distribution and Ecology of Plants in Waterfowl Breeding Areas of Iowa', by Dr. Ada Hayden, and 'Quail Management', 'Duck Studies', 'Pheasant Management', under the leadership of Drs. Thos. G. Scott and Geo. O. Hendrickson. The data given on nestings of these game birds on various Iowa tracts will be especially valuable to wildlife technicians engaged in similar work elsewhere.

LOCAL BIRD CLUBS IN IOWA

In a new department under the above heading we plan to give news items about the various bird clubs in future issues. We hope that our local clubs will co-operate by sending in notes on their activities, and that we shall be able to make it a regular feature. Remember, other clubs are interested in what your club is doing. These items in 'Iowa Bird Life' will inform the members about bird club work in the different cities of Iowa. Let us hear from you—regularly!

DUBUQUE.—The Dubuque Bird Club was organized in March, 1929. Its present officers are Mrs. R. W. Johnson, Pres.; Henry Herrmann, Vice-Pres.; Mary Young, Secy.-Treas. The club's year runs currently with the school year, beginning in September and ending in May.

On September 14, 1942, a pot-luck dinner was enjoyed in the lodge at Eagle Point Park, after which summer experiences with birds were related by members. Due to war conditions no long trips had provided unusual records. At the October meeting Ed C. Volkert discussed the Wood Duck, showing pictures of the nest in a tree near his home at Massey Station. Warbler data were considered in connection with the article which was later sent to 'Iowa Bird Life.' Miss Eleanor Little reported at November meeting concerning Australian birds, and Jack Tupper discussed winter feeding. Because of a blackout that evening, the Christmas party was cancelled and a meeting of the group was held at the public library, as usual, to hear Paul Kort and David Reed tell of casual winter visitors. For the pleasure of the club Ed Heuser read some of his poetic-prose notes of birds and nature in general, from "The Mississippi Garden".—Mrs. R. W. J.

CEDAR RAPIDS.—The Cedar Rapids Bird Club was organized in 1929 by W. F. Kubichek, now of the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, but who was then an instructor at Coe College. Present officers are: Pres., Dr. Warren N. Keck; Vice-Pres., Miss Miriam Confare; Secy.-Treas., Miss Emily Steffen. Regular meetings are held once a month from September through June in a classroom at Coe College, where the club is also fortunate in having available for its use the bird museum and the bird skins of the college.

Programs usually consist of talks or specially prepared papers given by outside speakers or by club members, with moving pictures, slides, and records of bird observations. Once a year a dinner takes the place of the regular meeting. The dinner is followed by a social time of games, quizzes and stunts pertaining to birds. In June a steak-fry concludes the year. During the present year a second meeting each month will be held for the purpose of helping new members to identify birds in migration. Bird skins from Coe College will be keyed and studied. A composite bird list is compiled at the end of each year, from the individual members' records. The results are tabulated on cards with full information given. We believe that careful records of this type will be of great value to workers in future years. Our club has twice entertained the Iowa Ornithologists' Union at its annual convention, in 1931 and 1938.—L. S.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Tech. Sgt. Robert A. Pierce, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Pierce, of Nashua, received commendation for his work with a medical detachment of an infantry regiment during the recent North African campaign. The citation, signed by Col. John W. O'Daniel, infantry commander, reads: "The regimental surgeon, Maj. Fred H. Beaumont, has reported that you rendered extraordinary, meritorious service during and following the action of the combat team in the vicinity of Algiers during the period from Nov. 8 to Nov. 12. I desire to commend you personally for the fine job that you did. I know that it takes a keen appreciation of your duty and a high regard for your job to perform this service in the manner that you did."—From Waterloo (Iowa) 'Courier'.

Mr. and Mrs. Ross J. Thornburg, of Des Moines, have been spending the past year or more in travel through the western and southwestern states. Writing to the Editor late in November, Mrs. Thornburg said: "We are back in foothills of the Santa Catalina Mts. of southern Arizona. Our constant bird neighbors are Palmer Thrashers, Cactus Wrens, Canon Towhees, a flock of 30 Gambel Quail, Desert and Gambel Sparrows, Black Phoebe, Gilded Flickers, Verdins and others. I like the Cactus Wrens best; they are inquisitive and amusing. Rock Wrens are on the hillsides and Canon Wrens are along the stream. Last year the immature Gambel Sparrows moved in on us in hordes; the hillsides are the habitat of the Black-chinned Sparrow. We found bird life in the Santa Rita Mts. very fascinating last spring."

Jean Laffoon, of Sioux City and more recently of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, enlisted in the Navy in November. He is a Pharmacist's Mate and is stationed at the U. S. Naval Hospital at Great Lakes, Ill. Another of our Sioux City members, Wilfred Crabb, is also a Pharmacist's Mate and is stationed at the same camp. Dayrle Crabb, brother of Wilfred and also one of our members, is a Pharmacist's Mate connected with the Marine Air Force in North Carolina. John Goodman, of Fairfield, has been stationed at the Army General Hospital, Fort Benning, Georgia, since September, working as a laboratory technician in bacteriology. He reports his locality as very interesting but he has lacked time for extensive bird observation; he made the acquaintance of the Brown-headed Nuthatch and has seen a number of other southern species during leisure moments.